



Orthodox Christian Laity

2022 YEAR-END APPEAL

Pan-Orthodox Unity in Action: Orthodox Christian Laity Concludes Annual Conference in Atlanta

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Your contributions, whether spiritual or financial, continue to make OCL's activities possible. We appreciate your year-end, tax-deductible donation. A donation card and envelope are enclosed.

Orthodox Christian Laity successfully completed its first in-person annual board meeting and conference since the beginning of the pandemic, in the Atlanta metropolitan area on October 14-15, 2022. This **35th Annual Conference** brought together board members, presenters and participants from New Jersey, Texas, Utah, Illinois, Florida, Virginia, Michigan, Ohio, California and Georgia.

Thursday, October 13

Board members arrived in Atlanta on Thursday evening, October 13, for a dinner gathering prior to the annual program. With the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, the Sts. Constantine & Helen Romanian Orthodox Church in Lilburn, Georgia, hosted the event under the leadership of Rev. Fr. George & Presbyteria Diana Acsente and Mr. Florian Ion. This parish is an integral part of the Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association (AIOPA).

Friday, October 14

The OCL Board met in the parish's social hall for its **annual board meeting** on Friday morning. Reports of the Executive Director, President and Webmaster **summarized the organization's activities and accomplishments** since the last annual meeting held via ZOOM in November 2021. A few of those activities include: monthly "mastermind" meetings and presentations; board member participation and contribution of suggestions to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's (GOA) Charter Committee; distribution of a statement and press release on the invasion of Ukraine; creation and distribution of "A Declaration for Orthodox Christian Unity in America" via the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, press releases, regular mail and digital media; direct contact with Archbishop Elpidophoros in his role as the head of the Eparchial Synod of the GOA and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Bishops USA (AOB); meetings and direct contact

with Mr. Nicholas Anton, Director of Operations for the AOB; commitment to supporting the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA); writing and distributing three papers in support of the Declaration; receipt of a second major bequest from the Frank Kamberos Trust; and posting numerous articles that promote the positive work of the committees of the Assembly of Bishops that exhibit Pan-Orthodox cooperation at the grassroots level (i.e. AIOPA). **Other decisions made and actions taken by the board:** passed the budget for 2023; revisited the need for a grant to fund the digitizing of OCL's archives at DePaul University; passed a resolution regarding the continuing war in Ukraine; reviewed and discussed a marketing and communications plan for the more effective promotion of OCL's initiatives and educational offerings; elected the new executive committee and board for 2023.

Visit to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Atlanta, GA

Following the annual board meeting, OCL Board members took a field trip to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral complex in Atlanta at the gracious invitation of one of the clergy of the cathedral and President of the Atlanta Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood, Fr. Christos Mars. The Board is grateful to Metropolitan Alexios for the blessing to visit the Cathedral and to Fr. Mars and Cathedral staff for their hospitality.

Saturday, October 15

The **35th Annual Conference, Pan-Orthodox Unity in Action**, commenced with a **slide presentation by members of AIOPA** followed by Q&A. The second session of the Conference featured a **Panel Discussion on "A Declaration for Orthodox Unity in America"** led by Attorney George D. Karcazes with participants: Peter Zarras, George Matsoukas and Alexei Krindatch. The third and final session featured a presentation by sociologist Alexei Krindatch regarding the results of his most recent survey: **Changes in Orthodox Church Life in the post-Pandemic America**. Videos of the three sessions are available online at <https://bit.ly/ocl35atlanta>.

Looking Ahead: 36th Annual Meeting and Conference

Tentatively, the OCL Board is planning to hold the 36th Annual Meeting and Conference in the New York Metro/New Jersey area the weekend of **October 20-22, 2023**. Mark your calendar!

Other Activities

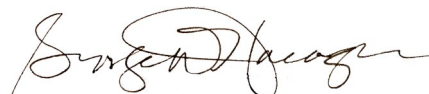
During the past year, Orthodox Christian Laity has also: 1) committed to sending a representative to the International Orthodox Theological Association Mega-Conference in Volos, Greece in January 11-15, 2023 to make a presentation about the work of OCL; 2) translated "A Declaration for Orthodox Christian Unity in America" into eleven languages; composed a letter and translated it into the languages of patriarchs and heads of autocephalous churches and mailed the letters and Declaration to them; 3) printed Occasional Paper #12, "Papers in Support of A Declaration for Orthodox Christian Unity in America."

We've enclosed OCL's most recent publication as our gift to you at this critical time for the Orthodox Church in this country. We ask that you sign the Declaration printed there. We welcome your feedback and comments. Additional copies are available upon request.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed and joyous Nativity Season and healthy New Year, and thanking you for your continued support,



Peter Zarras, OCL President



George D. Karcazes, OCL Secretary

on behalf of the OCL Board and Advisors